

# American

## NEWS & VIEWS

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Statement by President Obama on Libya.....	1
Vice President Biden Works to Strengthen U.S.-Mongolia Political, Economic Ties.....	2
U.S. Condemns Continuing Brutality of Syrian Regime.....	3
Food Insecurity in Eastern Africa Continent's Worst in 20 Years .....	3

**Statement by President Obama on Libya**

THE WHITE HOUSE  
Office of the Press Secretary  
August 22, 2011

**STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT ON LIBYA**

Blue Heron Farm  
Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts

THE PRESIDENT: Good afternoon, everybody. I just completed a call with my National Security Council on the situation in Libya. And earlier today I spoke to Prime Minister Cameron about the extraordinary events taking place there.

The situation is still very fluid. There remains a degree of uncertainty and there are still regime elements who pose a threat. But this much is clear: The Qaddafi regime is coming to an end, and the future of Libya is in the hands of its people.

In just six months, the 42-year reign of Muammar Qaddafi has unraveled. Earlier this year, we were inspired by the peaceful protests that broke out across Libya. This basic and joyful longing for human freedom echoed the voices that we had heard all across the region, from Tunis to Cairo. In the face of these protests, the Qaddafi regime responded with brutal crackdowns. Civilians were murdered in the streets. A campaign of violence was launched against the Libyan people. Qaddafi threatened to hunt peaceful protestors down like rats. As his forces advanced across the country, there existed the potential for wholesale massacres of innocent civilians.

In the face of this aggression, the international community took action. The United States helped shape a U.N. Security Council resolution that mandated the protection of Libyan civilians. An unprecedented coalition was formed that included the United States, our NATO partners and Arab nations. And in March, the international community launched a military operation to save lives and stop Qaddafi's forces in their tracks.

In the early days of this intervention the United States provided the bulk of the firepower, and then our friends and allies stepped forward. The Transitional National Council established itself as a credible representative of the Libyan people. And the United States, together with our European allies and friends across the region, recognized the TNC as the legitimate governing authority in Libya.

Qaddafi was cut off from arms and cash, and his forces were steadily degraded. From Benghazi to Misrata to the

western mountains, the Libyan opposition courageously confronted the regime, and the tide turned in their favor.

Over the last several days, the situation in Libya has reached a tipping point as the opposition increased its coordination from east to west, took town after town, and the people of Tripoli rose up to claim their freedom.

For over four decades, the Libyan people have lived under the rule of a tyrant who denied them their most basic human rights. Now, the celebrations that we've seen in the streets of Libya shows that the pursuit of human dignity is far stronger than any dictator. I want to emphasize that this is not over yet. As the regime collapses, there is still fierce fighting in some areas, and we have reports of regime elements threatening to continue fighting.

Although it's clear that Qaddafi's rule is over, he still has the opportunity to reduce further bloodshed by explicitly relinquishing power to the people of Libya and calling for those forces that continue to fight to lay down their arms for the sake of Libya.

As we move forward from this pivotal phase, the opposition should continue to take important steps to bring about a transition that is peaceful, inclusive and just. As the leadership of the TNC has made clear, the rights of all Libyans must be respected. True justice will not come from reprisals and violence; it will come from reconciliation and a Libya that allows its citizens to determine their own destiny.

In that effort, the United States will be a friend and a partner. We will join with allies and partners to continue the work of safeguarding the people of Libya. As remaining regime elements menace parts of the country, I've directed my team to be in close contact with NATO as well as the United Nations to determine other steps that we can take. To deal with the humanitarian impact, we're working to ensure that critical supplies reach those in need, particularly those who have been wounded.

Secretary Clinton spoke today with her counterparts from leading nations of the coalition on all these matters. And I've directed Ambassador Susan Rice to request that the U.N. Secretary General use next month's general assembly to support this important transition.

For many months, the TNC has been working with the international community to prepare for a post-Qaddafi Libya. As those efforts proceed, our diplomats will work with the TNC as they ensure that the institutions of the Libyan state are protected, and we will support them with the assets of the Qaddafi regime that were frozen earlier this year. Above all, we will call for an inclusive transition that leads to a democratic Libya.

As we move forward, we should also recognize the extraordinary work that has already been done. To the American people, these events have particular resonance. Qaddafi's regime has murdered scores of American citizens in acts of terror in the past. Today we remember the lives of those who were taken in those acts of terror and stand in solidarity with their families. We also pay tribute to Admiral Sam Locklear and all of the men and women in uniform who have saved so many lives over the last several months, including our brave pilots that have executed their mission with skill and extraordinary bravery. And all of this was done without putting a single U.S. troop on the ground.

To our friends and allies, the Libyan intervention demonstrates what the international community can achieve when we stand together as one -- although the efforts in Libya are not yet over. NATO has once more proven that it is the most capable alliance in the world and that its strength comes from both its firepower and the power of our democratic ideals. And the Arab members of our coalition have stepped up and shown what can be achieved when we act together as equal partners. Their actions send a powerful message about the unity of our effort and our support for the future of Libya.

Finally, the Libyan people: Your courage and character have been unbreakable in the face of a tyrant. An ocean divides us, but we are joined in the basic human longing for freedom, for justice and for dignity. Your revolution is your own, and your sacrifices have been extraordinary. Now, the Libya that you deserve is within your reach. Going forward, we will stay in close coordination with the TNC to support that outcome. And though there will be huge challenges ahead, the extraordinary events in Libya remind us that fear can give way to hope and that the power of people striving for freedom can bring about a brighter day.

Thank you very much.

### **Vice President Biden Works to Strengthen U.S.-Mongolia Political, Economic Ties**

By MacKenzie C. Babb | Staff Writer

Washington — Vice President Biden says the United States is impressed by Mongolia's "remarkable transition to democracy," and he has met with Prime Minister Sukhbaatar Batbold to discuss strengthening political, economic and cultural ties between the two nations.

"Today, Mongolia is not just a shining example for other nations in transition, but it's an emerging leader in the worldwide democratic movement, a responsible actor on the world stage and a close friend and partner of the United States," Biden said during a joint press conference with Batbold August 22. The two addressed reporters

after holding talks on a series of bilateral issues in Mongolia's capital city, Ulaanbaatar.

Batbold said Biden's visit shows U.S. support for Mongolia's successful transition to democracy after the Cold War, and said his country is "ready to share its experiences in promoting democratic values and culture" with the world. In July, Mongolia assumed the chairmanship of the Community of Democracies, a coalition of democratic countries dedicated to promoting democracy around the world. Biden said the country's term as chair will culminate in 2013 with a democratic summit in Ulaanbaatar.

In addition to shared political ties, the vice president said the United States and Mongolia are each committed to worldwide peace and security. Biden said that during the past decade, Mongolia's army has worked alongside U.S. forces and peacekeepers in countries across Africa, including Sierra Leone, Chad and Sudan. Biden said that Mongolian soldiers have also served with U.S. and international coalition forces in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Biden said the United States and Mongolia are also working toward closer economic relations, and that both countries are working to develop a transparency agreement to make Mongolia "an even more attractive destination" for foreign investors.

The vice president said the United States "remains strongly committed to helping the Mongolian people build a better future." He said the U.S. Agency for International Development has provided more than \$200 million to the country during the last 20 years for grant assistance, with a focus on programs that bolster democracy and economic growth. Biden added that through the Millennium Challenge Corporation compact, the United States has committed another \$285 million to assist the Mongolian government in combating corruption, improving rule of law, providing job training for citizens and developing critical infrastructure across the country.

After meeting with Batbold, Biden was scheduled to hold talks with President Tsakhia Elbegdorj. He was also set to take part in a cultural display of Mongolia's traditional sports later that afternoon. The vice president's visit builds largely on bilateral talks between President Obama and Elbegdorj, who visited Washington in June.

White House officials have called Biden's trip to Mongolia a "truly historic visit," as it marks the first time a U.S. vice president has traveled to the Northeast Asian nation in more than 60 years. The August 22 stop is the second on Biden's nine-day, three-nation visit to the region, following an August 17-22 visit to Beijing and Chengdu in China. He is set to visit Tokyo and Sendai in Japan

before leaving for Washington August 24.

## **U.S. Condemns Continuing Brutality of Syrian Regime**

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr. | Staff Writer

Washington — U.S. Ambassador Eileen Chamberlain Donahoe said in Geneva August 22 that the regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad is carrying out significant acts of brutality against anti-government opponents and that “innocent civilians are being massacred.”

“We have documentary evidence that they’ve used tanks, machine guns, grenades and snipers against peaceful protesters, human rights defenders,” Donahoe told reporters at the U.N. Human Rights Council in Geneva. Donahoe is the U.S. permanent representative to the council.

The Geneva-based Human Rights Council met for the second time since April on allegations that the Assad regime has committed significant human rights violations against the Syrian people. The session was held shortly after a U.N. human rights investigatory panel recommended to the U.N. Security Council that Syria be referred to the International Criminal Court for prosecution of alleged crimes.

“There’s growing unity and resolve that Assad must go,” Donahoe added. “He’s lost the legitimacy to rule the Syrian people.”

Compounding the urgency for international action, Donahoe said, is that the special representative of the U.N. secretary-general on children and armed conflict has let the Human Rights Council know that there are credible allegations of torture of children by Syrian security forces.

“We condemn, in the strongest terms, the ongoing slaughter and callous brutality unleashed by the Assad regime against the Syrian people,” Donahoe said during the council’s special session.

U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay told the 47-nation council that more than 2,200 people have been killed in Syria in the five-month-old crackdown. Donahoe told reporters that the United States supports accountability for atrocities against the Syrian people.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told Assad in a telephone call August 17 that “all military operations and mass arrests must cease immediately,” a U.N. statement said.

“Everyone knows that the human rights crisis has

deteriorated significantly in the last few weeks,” Donahoe said. “The high commissioner for human rights has come out and indicated that there are credible allegations of systematic and widespread human rights violations that may amount to crimes against humanity.”

Donahoe said the Arab League, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the European Union have urged Assad to immediately stop the violence, and President Obama has asked Assad to step down and allow the Syrian people to move toward a peaceful and democratic future.

The purpose of the special session on August 22 was to convince Assad that he must step down and the violence must stop, she added.

“The specific outcome we hope for is the establishment of a commission of inquiry to investigate facts on the ground in Syria and to bring the Syrian authorities who are responsible for the atrocities to account,” Donahoe said.

“To the brave people of Syria who are demanding freedom and dignity, we send the message that the world stands by you, and we will not ignore your plight,” she added.

## **Food Insecurity in Eastern Africa Continent’s Worst in 20 Years**

By Charlene Porter | Staff Writer

Washington — The worst drought in more than half a century in Eastern Africa has brought on the region’s worst food insecurity in 20 years, according to an assessment of conditions in the region released by the Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit-Somalia (FSNAU), a project funded jointly by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the European Commission.

“The current situation represents Africa’s worst food security crisis since Somalia’s 1991-1992 famine,” according to an August 16 FSNAU report. The report further predicts that the critical food needs will persist until at least December 2011.

U.S. and international estimates find that more than 12 million people in this region are expected to be affected by the widespread food insecurity.

Famine conditions were first declared in two regions of southern Somalia a month ago, and now food insecurity has reached the level of famine in three other areas of Somalia, notably the capital, Mogadishu. The FSNAU assessment, compiled with information from food experts in the regions, finds that 3.7 million people are in a state of food crisis, and that 3.2 million people need immediate

lifesaving assistance.

Lack of rain has cracked the earth and killed the animals, and tens of thousands of Somalis have left their lands to seek assistance in the capital. About 700,000 other Somalis have crossed international borders to refugee camps in Kenya, Ethiopia and Djibouti. Drought is also widespread in these countries, where native populations are themselves under stress for resources as they attempt to accommodate desperate Somali refugees and the international donors who have converged on the region to attempt assistance.

USAID is among the major players in the relief effort, and has been responsible for the distribution of some \$580 million in U.S. assistance to provide food, medicine and shelter to Africans struggling to survive this crisis.

The U.S.-backed Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) forecast the drought and predicted the famine as much as a year ago, allowing USAID and other donors to preposition food in the region to be ready for the mounting urgency of food insecurity.

But along with hunger, sickness comes all too frequently. As stores and food supplies have grown scarcer or impossibly costly, many in the region are developing malnutrition. In this physically compromised condition, the Somalis walk sometimes hundreds of miles to reach a refugee camp in neighboring countries. They find camps exceeding capacity, with little water and poor sanitation facilities, providing the perfect breeding ground for infectious diseases. Both cholera and measles have stricken the region, according to the latest bulletin on World Health Organization (WHO) efforts in the region.

Cases of measles increased in July more than sixfold, compared with a similar period in 2010. WHO and other health agencies have launched an emergency vaccination campaign in South and Central Somalia, attempting to reach 2.3 million children with vaccines.

Almost 4,700 cholera cases have been confirmed in Mogadishu and other regions, with children under 5 accounting for 75 percent of the cases.

"WHO's major concern is to monitor and detect new disease outbreaks in the many informal settlements set up by internally displaced people in and around Mogadishu," according to the latest WHO bulletin. "These informal settlements are a major challenge to the few health service providers who also have limited operational capacity."

Amidst this sheaf of sobering reports, USAID does foresee a couple of good breaks by year's end. While conditions may get worse until October, the prospect for a Kenyan

harvest is at near-normal output in the key agricultural areas of the Rift Valley, Nyanza and the Western provinces, where rainfall has been near normal. The yields for the season could reach near-normal levels, according to an August 22 USAID report, with a downward trend in maize prices.

Looking toward the next rainy season, October to December, the USAID report says that if the rains reach normal levels, food security conditions would be expected to improve.

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